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BAT MAN
JUNGLE JEOPARDY!
THE NEW
THERE'S NO STOPPING US NOW.

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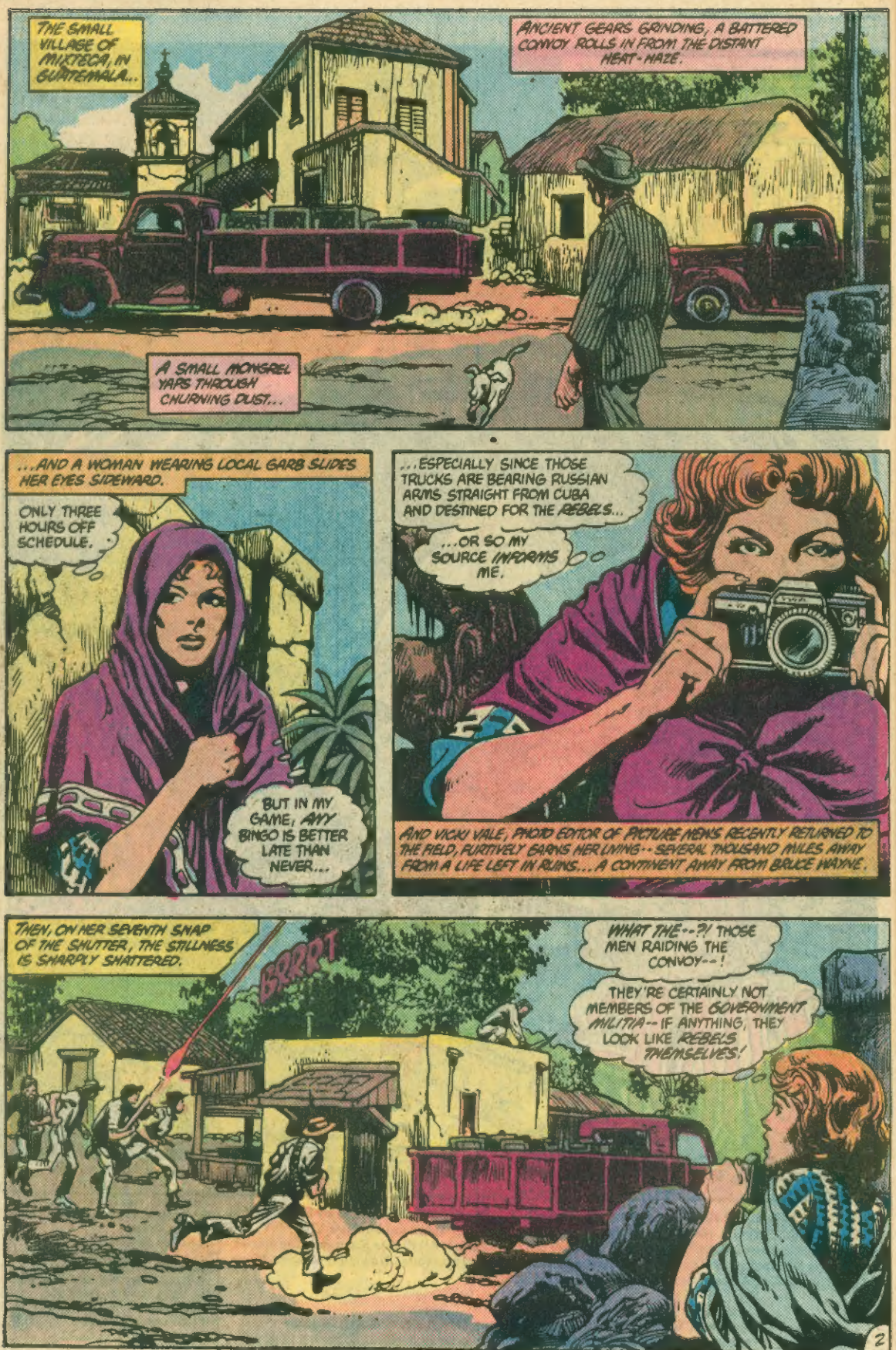
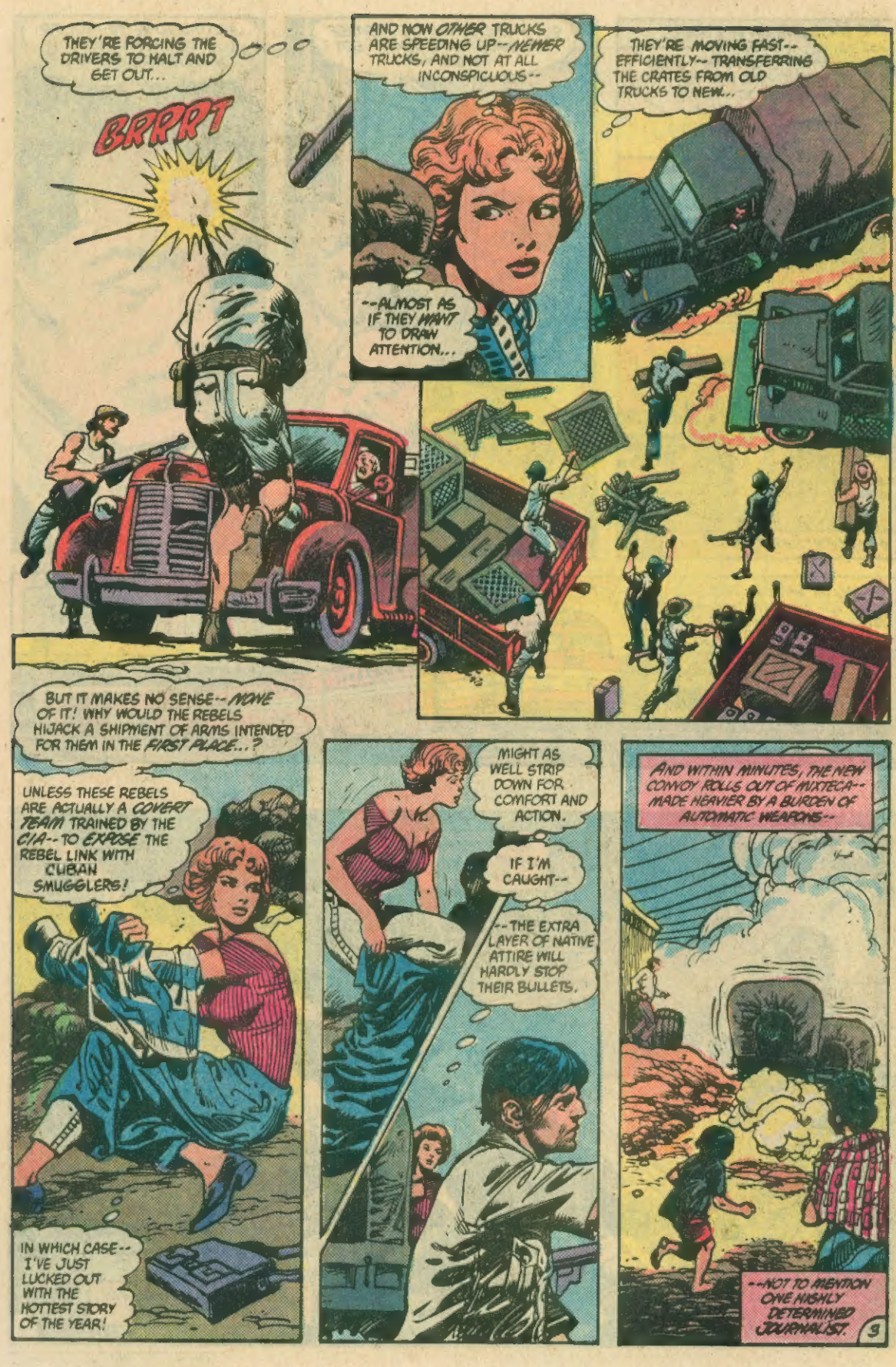
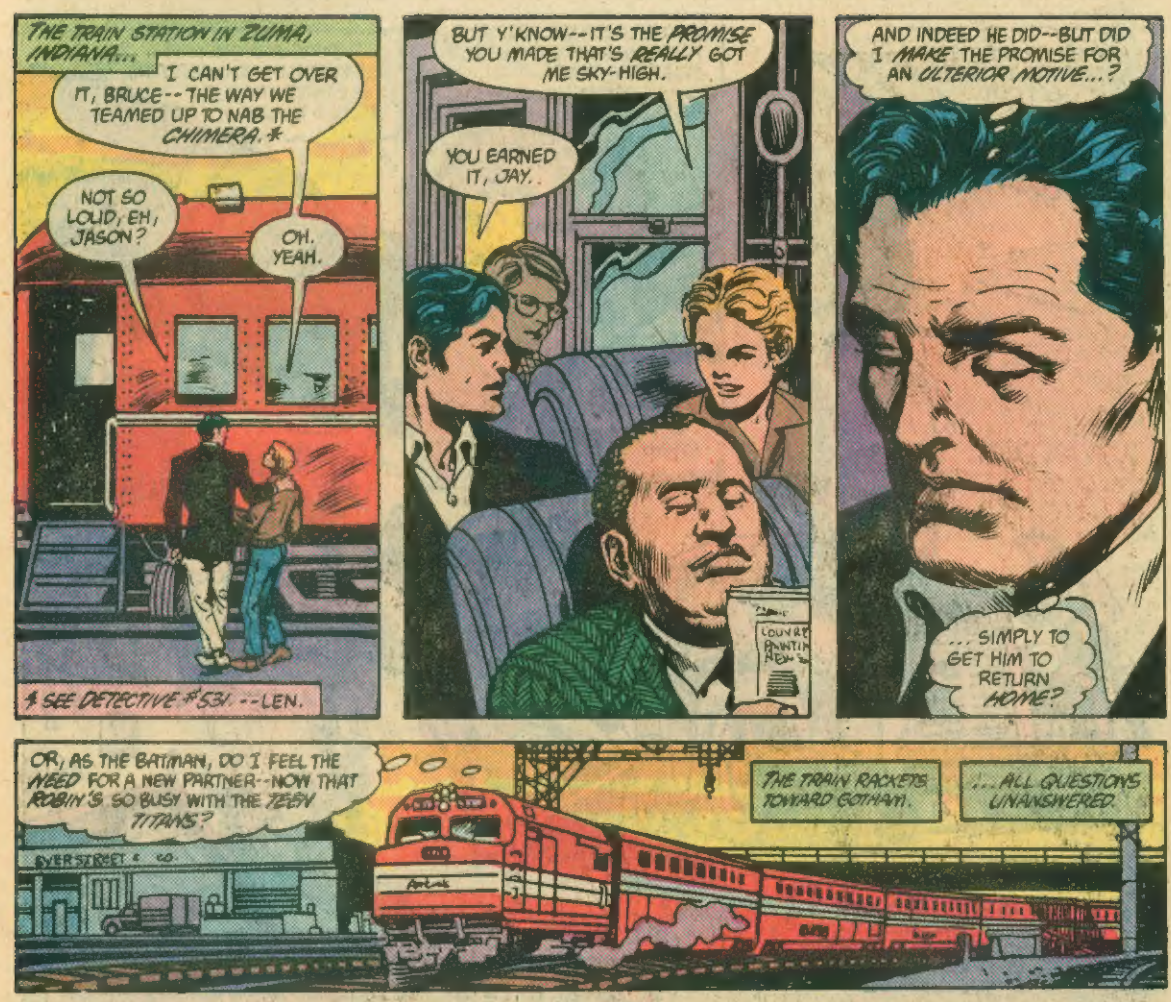

THE SMALL VILLAGE OF MIXTECA, IN GUATEMALA...
ANCIENT GEARS GRINDING, A BATTERED CONVOY ROLLS IN FROM THE DISTANT HEAT-HAZE.
A SMALL MONGREL YAPS THROUGH CHURNING DUST...
...AND A WOMAN WEARING LOCAL GARB SLIDES HER EYES SIDEWARD.
ONLY THREE HOURS OFF SCHEDULE.
BUT IN MY GAME, AYY BINGO IS BETTER LATE THAN NEVER...
...ESPECIALLY SINCE THOSE TRUCKS ARE BEARING RUSSIAN ARMS STRAIGHT FROM CUBA AND DESTINED FOR THE REBELS...
...OR SO MY SOURCE INFORMS ME.
AND VICKI VALE, PHOTO EDITOR OF PICTURE NEWS RECENTLY RETURNED TO THE FIELD, FURTIVELY EARNS HER LIVING--SEVERAL THOUSAND MILES AWAY FROM A LIFE LEFT IN RUINS...A CONTINENT AWAY FROM BRUCE WAYNE.
THEN, ON HER SEVENTH SNAP OF THE SHUTTER, THE STILLNESS IS SHARPLY SHATTERED.
BRRRT
WHAT THE--?! THOSE MEN RAIDING THE CONVOY--!
THEY'RE CERTAINLY NOT MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT MILITIA--IF ANYTHING, THEY LOOK LIKE REBELS THEMSELVES!
2


THEY'RE FORCING THE DRIVERS TO HALT AND GET OUT...
BRRRT
AND NOW OTHER TRUCKS ARE SPEEDING UP--NEWER TRUCKS, AND NOT AT ALL INCONSPICUOUS--
--ALMOST AS IF THEY WANT TO DRAW ATTENTION...
THEY'RE MOVING FAST--EFFICIENTLY--TRANSFERRING THE CRATES FROM OLD TRUCKS TO NEW...
BUT IT MAKES NO SENSE--NONE OF IT! WHY WOULD THE REBELS HIJACK A SHIPMENT OF ARMS INTENDED FOR THEM IN THE FIRST PLACE...?
UNLESS THESE REBELS ARE ACTUALLY A COVERT TEAM TRAINED BY THE CIA--TO EXPOSE THE REBEL LINK WITH CUBAN SMUGGLERS!
IN WHICH CASE--I'VE JUST LUCKED OUT WITH THE HOTTEST STORY OF THE YEAR!
MIGHT AS WELL STRIP DOWN FOR COMFORT AND ACTION.
IF I'M CAUGHT--
--THE EXTRA LAYER OF NATIVE ATTIRE WILL HARDLY STOP THEIR BULLETS.
AND WITHIN MINUTES, THE NEW CONVOY ROLLS OUT OF MIXTECA--MADE HEAVIER BY A BURDEN OF AUTOMATIC WEAPONS--
--NOT TO MENTION ONE HIGHLY DETERMINED JOURNALIST.
3


THE TRAIN STATION IN ZUMA, INDIANA...
I CAN'T GET OVER IT, BRUCE--THE WAY WE TEAMED UP TO NAB THE CHIMERA.*
NOT SO LOUD, EH, JASON?
OH. YEAH.
* SEE DETECTIVE #531. --LEN.
BUT Y'KNOW--IT'S THE PROMISE YOU MADE THAT'S REALLY GOT ME SKY-HIGH.
YOU EARNED IT, JAY.
AND INDEED HE DID--BUT DID I MAKE THE PROMISE FOR AN ULTERIOR MOTIVE...?
...SIMPLY TO GET HIM TO RETURN HOME?
OR, AS THE BATMAN, DO I FEEL THE NEED FOR A NEW PARTNER--NOW THAT ROBIN'S SO BUSY WITH THE TEEN TITANS?
THE TRAIN RACKETS TOWARD GOTHAM.
...ALL QUESTIONS UNANSWERED.
NIGHT, DEEP IN GUATEMALAN JUNGLE...
...WHERE RUINS LANGUISH IN MILLENNIA-LONG DECAY.
4

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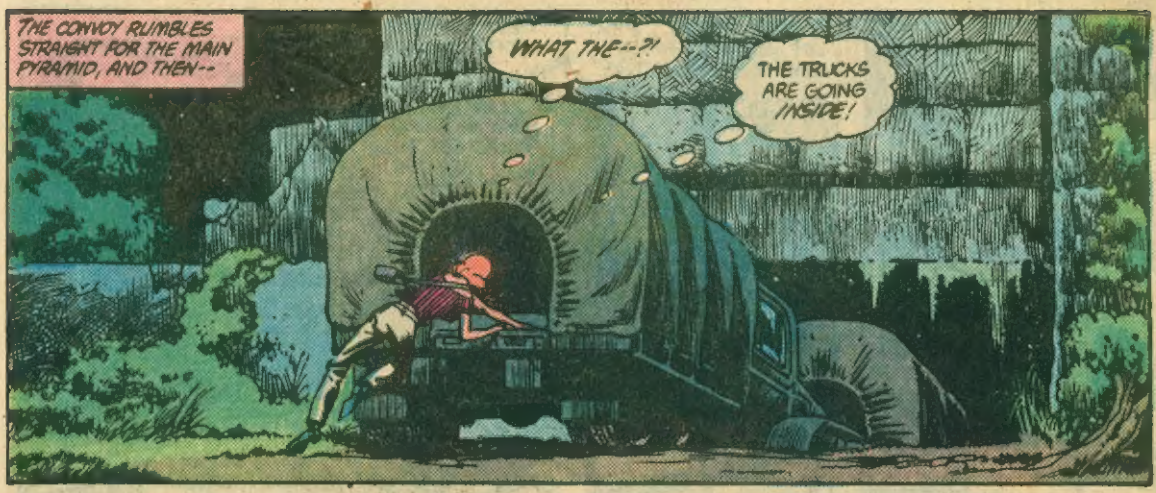

THE CONVOY RUMBLES STRAIGHT FOR THE MAIN PYRAMID, AND THEN--
WHAT THE--?!
THE TRUCKS ARE GOING INSIDE!

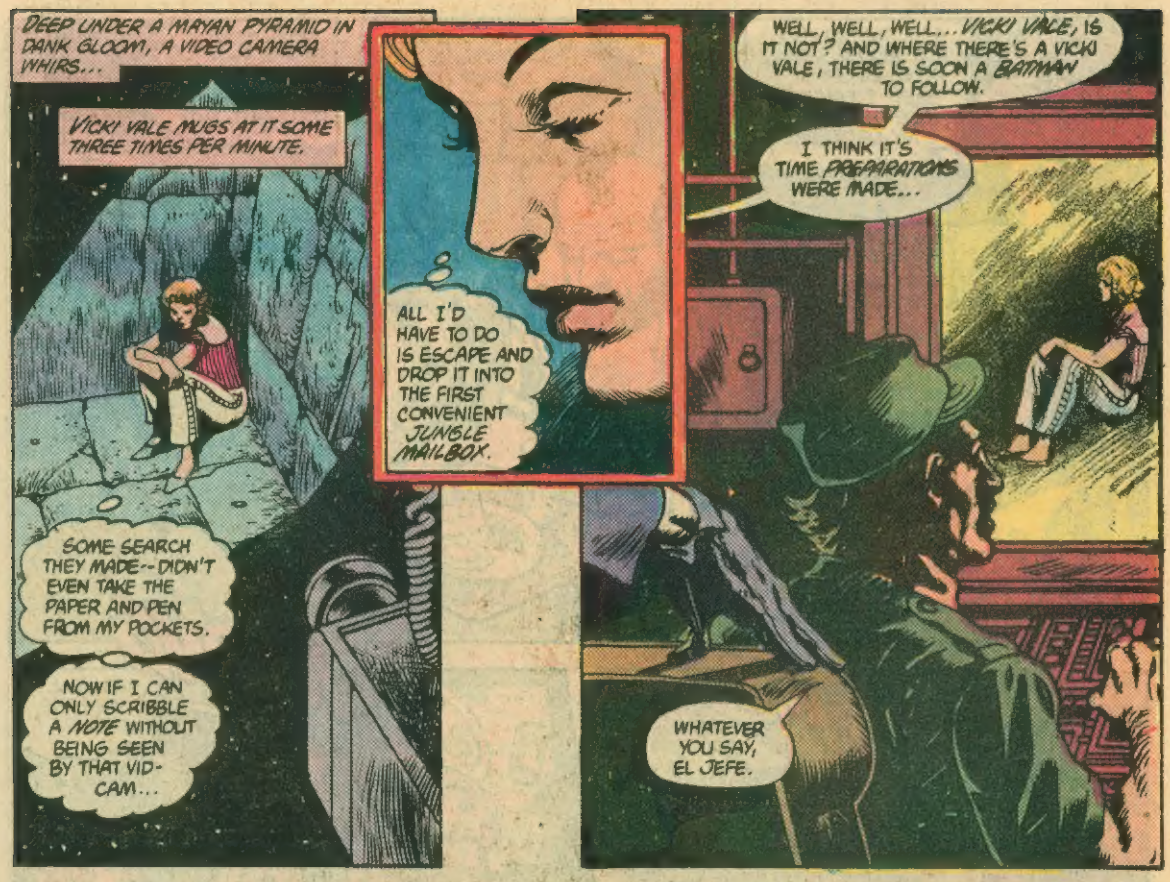
THE FLOOR-- IT'S SWIVELLING DOWN INTO A RAMP!

AND NOW, THE RAMP IS RISING BACK UP..
I DON'T BELIEVE IT--AN HONEST-TO-DIME-NOVEL SECRET HIDEOUT-- UNDER ANCIENT MAYAN RUINS!

IF ONLY I'D BROUGHT INFRA-RED EQUIPMENT...
NO WAY TO SNAP ANY SHOTS IN THIS--

--DARKNESS?

GOTHAM HOSPITAL...
I...I KNOW IT'S ALL MY FAULT, GORDON...
GOTHA
I MEAN, I KNOW I MADE LIFE MISERABLE FOR YA DOWN AT HEADQUARTERS...
...BUT I'M REALLY A GOOD COP, GORDON -- I REALLY AM, Y'KNOW...
...AN' I NEVER KNEW MY STUPID TRICKS COULD GET THIS SERIOUS.
MAYBE YA CAN'T HEAR ME, GORDON, BUT YA GOTTA BELIEVE ME...
WAP
THAT LAST STUNT ABOUT THE BATMAN BEIN' DEAD? THAT WAS MAYOR HILL'S IDEA, NOT MINE.
IF I'DA KNOWN IT WUZ GONNA GIVE YA A STROKE -- WHY, I NEVER WOULDA--
OH HELL.
6


DEEP UNDER A MAYAN PYRAMID IN DANK GLOOM, A VIDEO CAMERA WHIRS...
VICKI VALE MUGS AT IT SOME THREE TIMES PER MINUTE.
SOME SEARCH THEY MADE--DIDN'T EVEN TAKE THE PAPER AND PEN FROM MY POCKETS.
NOW IF I CAN ONLY SCRIBBLE A NOTE WITHOUT BEING SEEN BY THAT VID-CAM...
ALL I'D HAVE TO DO IS ESCAPE AND DROP IT INTO THE FIRST CONVENIENT JUNGLE MAILBOX.
WELL, WELL, WELL... VICKI VALE, IS IT NOT? AND WHERE THERE'S A VICKI VALE, THERE IS SOON A BATMAN TO FOLLOW.
I THINK IT'S TIME PREPARATIONS WERE MADE...
WHATEVER YOU SAY, EL JEFE.

INDEED. AFTER ALL, TAKING OVER AN ENTIRE COUNTRY IS NO MEAN FEAT--EVEN FOR ME--AND WE WOULDN'T WANT IT SPOILED, WOULD WE?
NO, EL JEFE. WHAT SHOULD WE DO?
EVERYTHING.
SO FAR, SO GOOD, I GUESS.
...SAID THE NONCHALANT CORRESPONDENT, HOPING NO POINTS ARE AWARDED FOR MEATNESS.
LOOK, MA, NO EYES--IT'S ALL IN THE FINGERS AND WRIST...
AND DONE--ONE EXERCISE IN FUTILITY, MERELY TO BREAK THE TEDIUM.
7

AND JUST IN TIME FOR ROOM SERVICE, NO LESS. LET'S SEE... I COULD HIDE THE NOTE IN MY LEFTOVERS...
...BUT I DOUBT IF EVEN MY DEATHLESS PROSE COULD CONVERT THE DISHWASHER...
HUH?!
THE STUPID BRUTE IS TURNING HIS BACK!
AFTER EIGHT YEARS AS A PHOTOGRAPHER, NEVER THOUGHT I'D SAY IT, BUT--
WAP
EH--?
KLONG
--TO HELL WITH THE CAMERA!
THE SHOCK OF THE SUN DAZZLES HER--
--BUT LESS SO THAN THE BIZARRE SIGHT WHICH GREETS HER ADJUSTING EYES...
PEOPLE EVERYWHERE! THE ENTIRE SITE IS SWARMING WITH TOURISTS!
8

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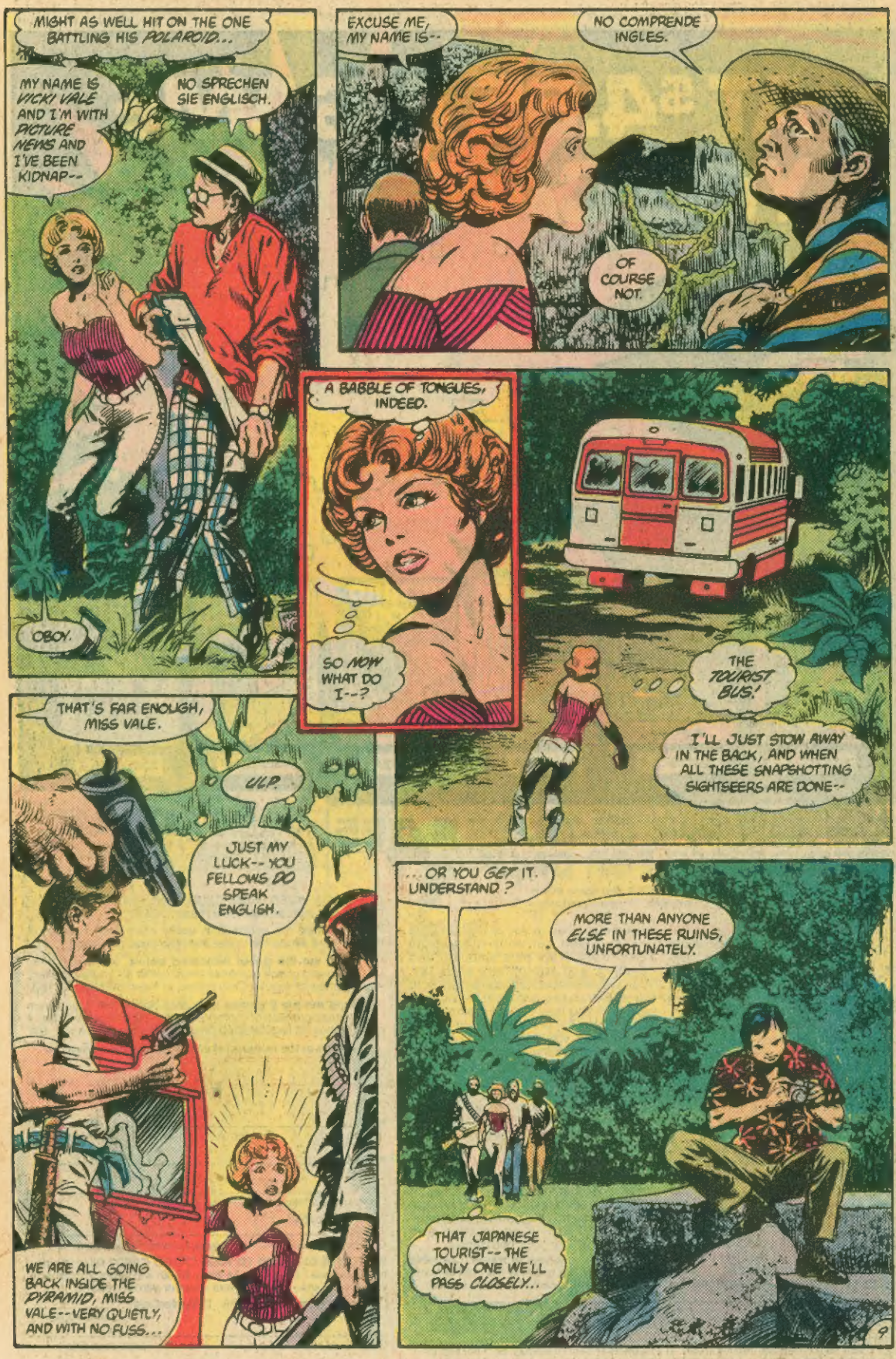
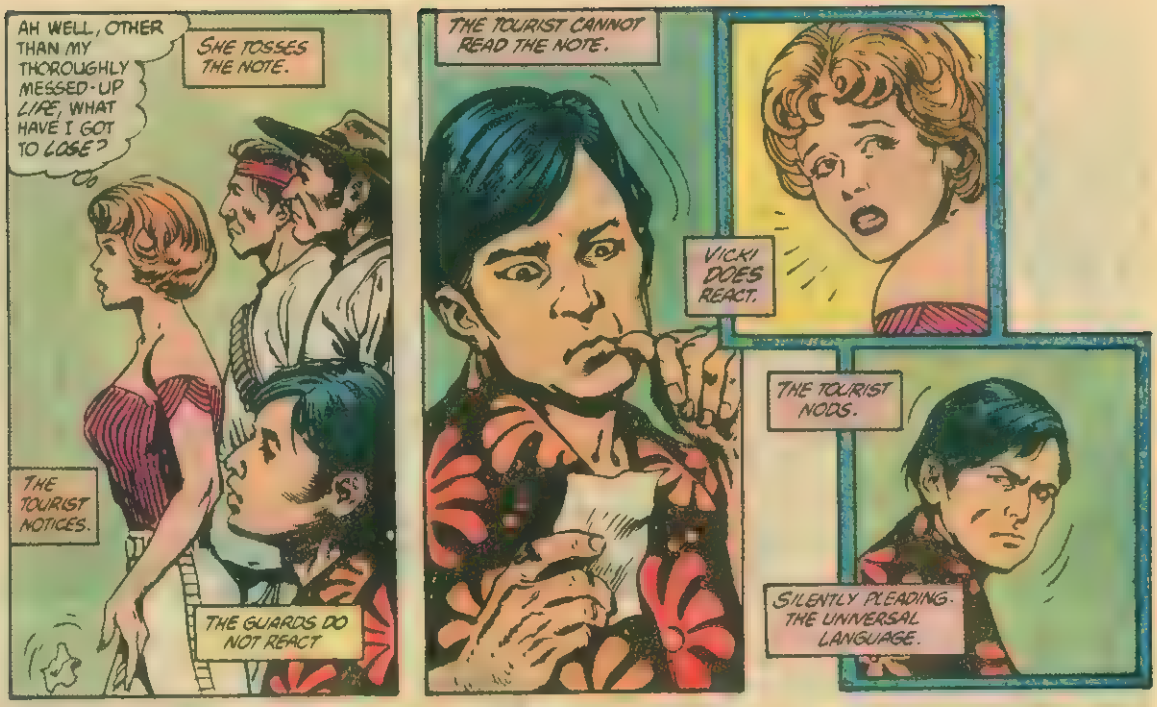
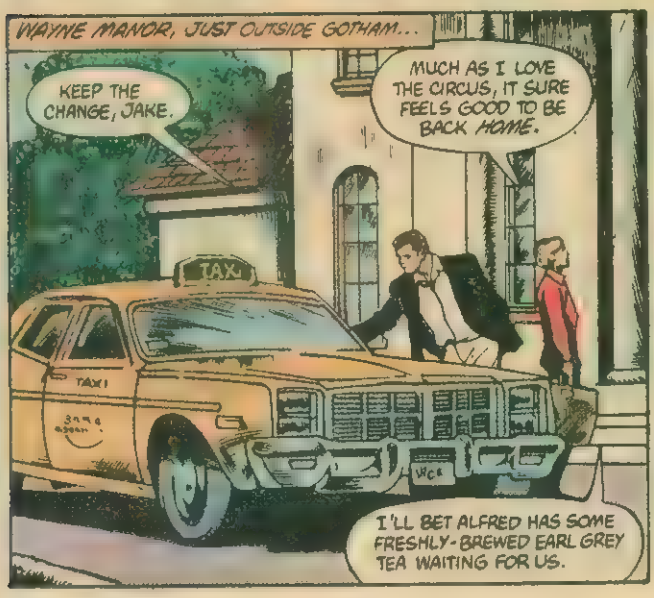

MIGHT AS WELL HIT ON THE ONE BATTLING HIS POLAROID...
MY NAME IS VICKI VALE AND I'M WITH PICTURE NEWS AND I'VE BEEN KIDNAP--
NO SPRECHEN SIE ENGLISCH.
OBOY.
EXCUSE ME, MY NAME IS--
NO COMPRENDE INGLES.
OF COURSE NOT.
A BABBLE OF TONGUES, INDEED.
SO NOW WHAT DO I--?
THE TOURIST BUS!
I'LL JUST STOW AWAY IN THE BACK, AND WHEN ALL THESE SNAPSHOTTING SIGHTSEERS ARE DONE--
THAT'S FAR ENOUGH, MISS VALE.
ULP.
JUST MY LUCK-- YOU FELLOWS DO SPEAK ENGLISH.
WE ARE ALL GOING BACK INSIDE THE PYRAMID, MISS VALE-- VERY QUIETLY, AND WITH NO FUSS...
...OR YOU GET IT. UNDERSTAND?
MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE IN THESE RUINS, UNFORTUNATELY.
THAT JAPANESE TOURIST-- THE ONLY ONE WE'LL PASS CLOSELY..
9


AH WELL, OTHER THAN MY THOROUGHLY MESSED-UP LIFE, WHAT HAVE I GOT TO LOSE?
SHE TOSSES THE NOTE.
THE TOURIST NOTICES.
THE GUARDS DO NOT REACT
THE TOURIST CANNOT READ THE NOTE.
VICKI DOES REACT.
THE TOURIST NODS.
SILENTLY PLEADING. THE UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE.

FIVE MINUTES LATER...
SHE GOT THE NOTE OFF, BOSS.
EXCELLENT, MY AMUSING LITTLE "REBEL."
SOON WE SHALL HAVE SOME FUN WITH THE BATMAN... AND I DO MEAN FUN.


WAYNE MANOR, JUST OUTSIDE GOTHAM...
KEEP THE CHANGE, JAKE.
MUCH AS I LOVE THE CIRCUS, IT SURE FEELS GOOD TO BE BACK HOME.
TAXI
I'LL BET ALFRED HAS SOME FRESHLY-BREWED EARL GREY TEA WAITING FOR US.

BUT INSIDE...
IT APPEARS ALFRED ISN'T HERE, JAY.
LOOK, BRUCE-- A NOTE ON THE MANTEL.

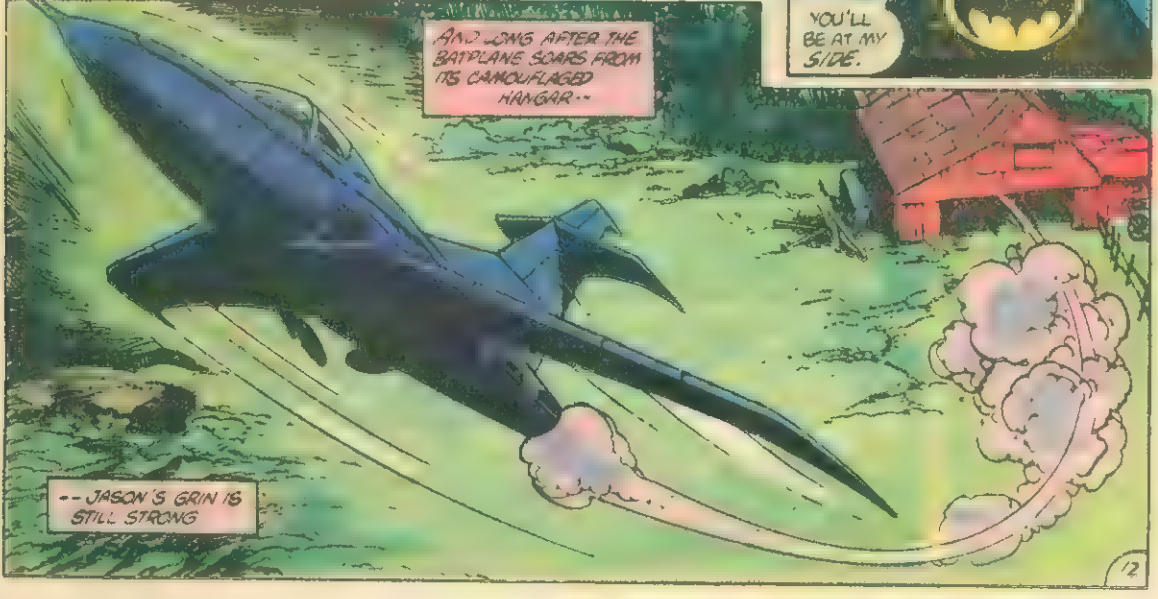
HMM... IT'S FROM ALFRED, ALL RIGHT, AND WRITTEN HASTILY: "AWAY ON PERSONAL MATTER. RETURN UNKNOWN. FORGIVE ME."
HUH? BUT THAT ISN'T LIKE ALFRED TO--
BRRIING
BRUCE? IT'S BARBARA GORDON. I.. I'M AT GOTHAM HOSPITAL. DAD'S HAD A... STROKE...
WHAT?! WE'LL BE THERE IN TWENTY MINUTES, BARBARA.
AND, A HALF-HOUR LATER...
--TRIGGERED BY ANOTHER ONE OF HARVEY BULLOCK'S FLASHBACKS, AS FAR AS I CAN DETERMINE.
ARE YOU SURE IT WAS--
BULLOCK! SPEAK OF THE DEVIL!
OH, I... UH, I DIN'T KNOW THE COMMISSIONER ALREADY HAD VISITORS.
JUST CAME OVER WITH SOME NEWS WE RECEIVED AT HEADQUARTERS--THOUGHT HE MIGHT WANNA KNOW--BUT HE'S STILL ASLEEP...
WHAT NEWS, BULLOCK?
HEY!
I SAID WHAT NEWS
SOMETHIN' FROM A JAP TOURIST DOWN IN GUATEMALA--COULDN'T UNNERSTAND A WORD HE WUZ SAYIN'..
...BUT HE CABLED A NOTE FROM SOME REPORTER DAME WORKS FOR PICTURE NEWS--GOT HERSELF IN TROUBLE DOWN THERE..
THE DETAILS, BULLOCK--WE'LL PASS THEM ON TO THE COMMISSIONER WHEN HE EMERGES FROM HIS COMA--WHICH, FOR YOUR SAKE, HAD BETTER BE SOON.

BUT GORDON'S RECOVERY IS NOT QUICK--AND SO, IN THE BATCAVE UNDER WAYNE MANOR, LATER THAT NIGHT..
FOR THE FINAL TIME, JASON, NO.
BUT YOU PROMISED--
I SAID WE'D SEE. THAT'S NOT THE SAME AS A PROMISE

IT WAS WHEN YOU WANTED ME TO COME BACK HERE
DO YOU WANT TO LEAVE AGAIN? IS THAT WHAT YOU'RE SAYING?

NO, OF COURSE NOT, BRUCE, BUT--
LOOK, JAY, I SAID I'D GIVE YOU A CHANCE--AND I WILL --BUT THIS ISN'T THE TIME. I'M GOING TO CENTRAL AMERICA. YOU'VE GOT SCHOOL...

OKAY, YOU'RE RIGHT. BUT THE NEXT TIME YOU TACKLE A CASE HERE IN GOTHAM...?
YOU'LL BE AT MY SIDE.


AND LONG AFTER THE BATPLANE SOARS FROM ITS CAMOUFLAGED HANGAR--
--JASON'S GRIN IS STILL STRONG

FIVE HOURS LATER...
IT'S EASY TO FORGET--
--BUT SOME OF THE WORLD IS STILL UNTOUCHED BY TIME OR PROGRESS...
VICKI'S NOTE SAID THE RUINS WERE SOME FORTY OR FIFTY MILES SOUTH OF MIXTECA--
--WHICH MATCHES THE RUINS OF ZYANYA, FIFTY-THREE MILES SOUTH...
...AND THIS CLEARING IS THE CLOSEST POSSIBLE LANDING SITE, THREE MILES FROM THE RUINS.
TOO TIGHT FOR COMFORT--NOW LET'S SEE ABOUT SURVIVAL...
HE MAKES IT.
BETTER LEAVE THE ENGINES RUNNING UNTIL I CAN SCAN FOR TROUBLE...
I MAY HAVE TO TAKE OFF FAST AND SIMPLY PARACHUTE IN.
BUT EVEN AS HE VAULTS FROM THE COCKPIT...
SPOTLIGHTS--PINPOINTING ME!
BRRRT
AND THE LIGHT IS FOLLOWED BY--
AUTOMATIC FIRE! SHOULD'VE KNOWN THERE'D BE A RECEPTION LIKE THIS--THE CLEARING IS THE ONLY SORE THUMB IN HUNDREDS OF SQUARE MILES OF JUNGLE...
WHOEVER'S HOLDING VICKI WOULD BE INSANE NOT TO COVER IT!
HE DIVES UNDER THE PLANE.
13

BUT...
... SINCE I'VE GOT TO DEAL WITH MY ERROR...
THE BATARANG CAUGHT.
LET'S HOPE IT WAS THE THROTTLE.
HE YANKS.
VRAOWWWW
THE THROTTLE IT IS.
BAOUMMMM
SCRATCH ONE BATPLANE-- AND PERHAPS ONE MORE OF MY NINE LIVES...
...LEAVING ME WITH A NEGATIVE THREE-HUNDRED-TWELVE.

HE MOVES SWIFTLY THROUGH THE NIGHT JUNGLE, PAUSING WELL BEYOND THE CONFUSED MACHINEGUNNERS...
THEY'LL REGROUP AND BE AFTER ME SOON ENOUGH...
...MAKING THE NEXT THREE MILES INTERESTING, IF NOTHING ELSE
WAIT A MINUTE -- I DON'T LIKE THE LOOKS OF THE TRAIL UP AHEAD
KOOMPH
AS I THOUGHT -- THE DISTURBED SOIL HID A MINE.
AND SO HE LEAVES THE TRAIL FOR SAFER IF LESS BEATEN TERRAIN..
...HIS THOUGHTS NOW GROWING INTROSPECTIVE...
STRANGE HOW MY NIGHT'S GOAL IS A PERFECT METAPHOR FOR BRUCE WAYNE'S PERSONAL LIFE -- BOTH ARE IN RUINS.
I FINALLY MANAGED TO GET JASON BACK -- BUT I WAS SO BUSY DOING THAT, I LOST TRACK OF VICKI..
STILL I'LL BE DAMNED IF THE LOSS WILL BE--
--PERMANENT.
A DART!

AND FROM THE LOOKS OF THESE INDIANS--
--NO DOUBT THE DART WAS POISONED.
THEY POUR FROM THICK SHADOWS, THE UTTER SILENCE OF THEIR ATTACK MAKING THEM ALL THE MORE DEADLY...
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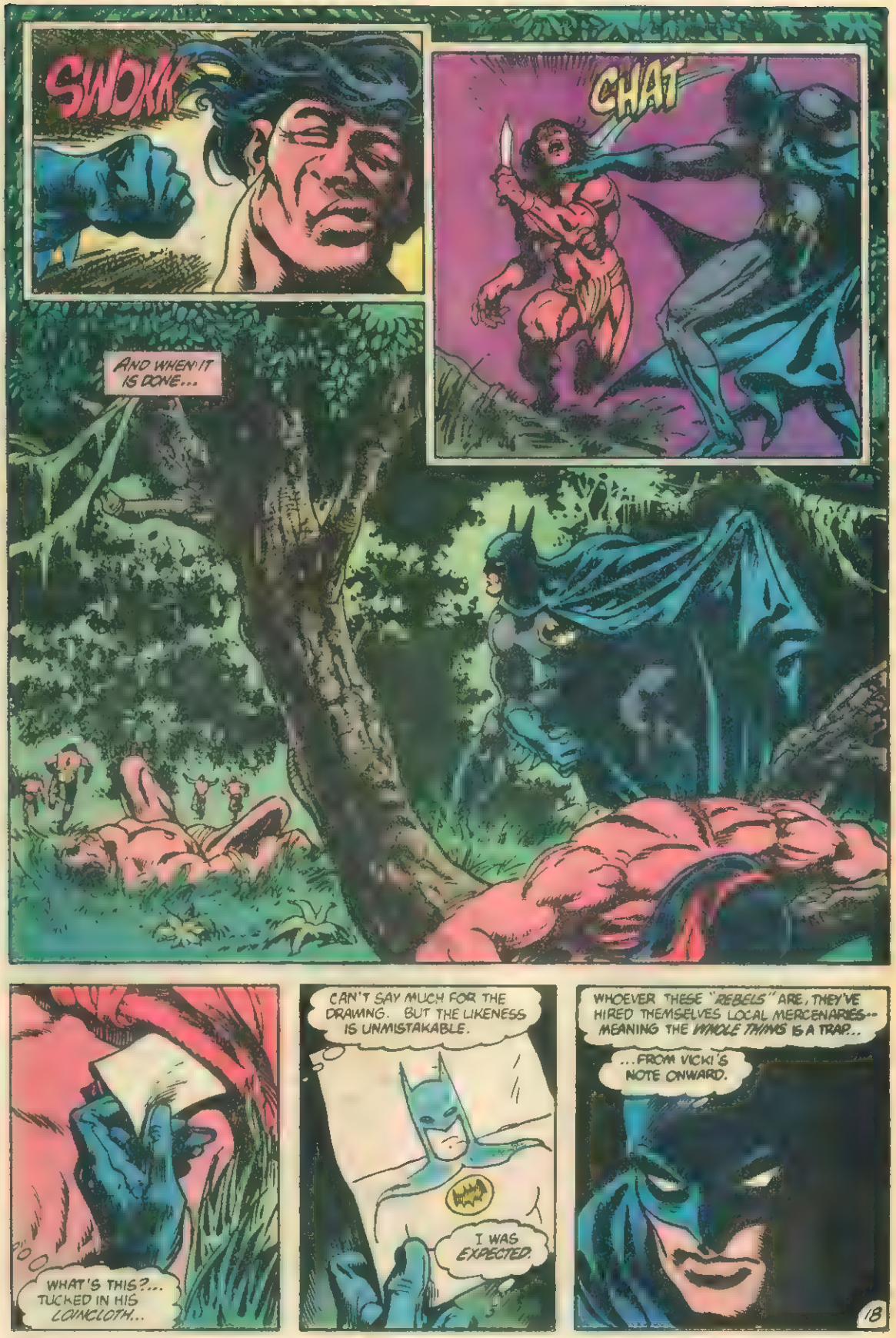
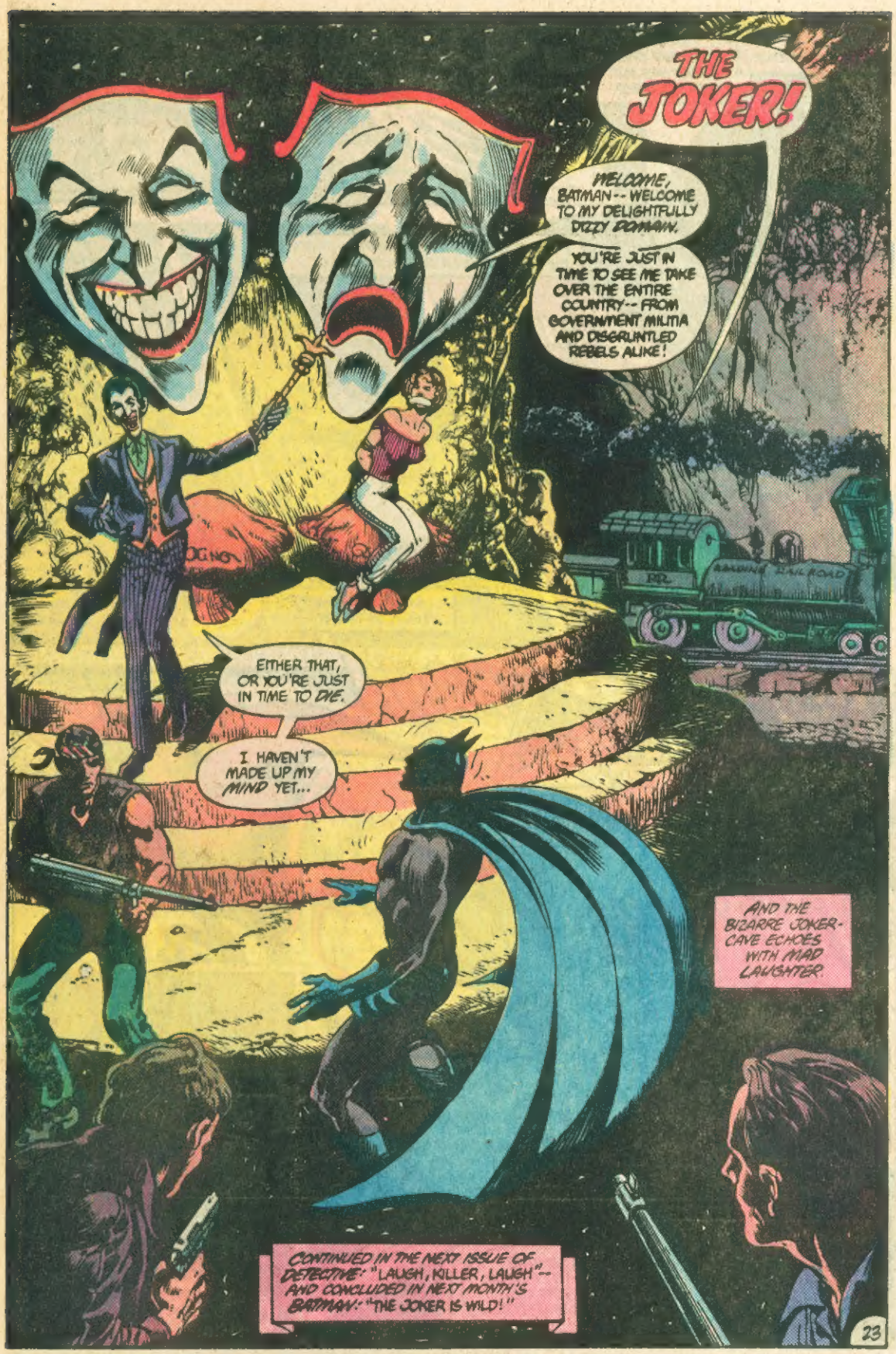

SWOKK
CHAT
AND WHEN IT IS DONE...
WHAT'S THIS?... TUCKED IN HIS LOINCLOTH...
CAN'T SAY MUCH FOR THE DRAWING. BUT THE LIKENESS IS UNMISTAKABLE.
I WAS EXPECTED.
WHOEVER THESE "REBELS" ARE, THEY'VE HIRED THEMSELVES LOCAL MERCENARIES-- MEANING THE WHOLE THING IS A TRAP...
...FROM VICKI'S NOTE ONWARD.

THE RUINS OF ZYANYA...
...WHERE THE GHOSTS OF MAYANS PAST SUFFER THE INDIGNITY OF MODERN INVASION.
THIS IS HOME-BASE, SENTRIES. COME IN.
DO YOU READ?
WE READ YOU, BASE THE BATMAN HAS PENETRATED SECTOR DELTA.
TIME TO SIC THE CATS ON HIM.
OKAY-- OVER AND OUT, SENTRY.
YOU HEARD HIM, BOYS.
BRRRRT
GETTING CLOSE NOW...
BRRRT
EH--? THAT CAME FROM UP AHEAD..
"BUT WHAT ARE THEY SHOOTING AT--?"

THE ANSWER IS NOTHING -- AND IT LEAPS FULL IN HIS FACE...
JAGUARS! THE GUNFIRE WAS MERELY TO HERD THEM AT ME!
AND THESE CATS ARE A LOT LEANER THAN THE CIRCUS LION I RECENTLY FOUGHT--
--NOT TO MENTION HARDLY HALF-TAMED.
STILL...
...IT'S THE BEST IF THEY KEEP THEMSELVES ENTERTAINED.
I'VE GOT A MORE CONSTRUCTIVE DATE--
"--IN SOME RUINS."
VICKI'S NOTE SAID SHE WAS BEING HELD IN THE MAIN PYRAMID...
...THE ONE WHICH JUST HAPPENS TO BE CRAWLING WITH ARMED GUARDS.
HMM...I WONDER IF THEY'D FALL FOR A SUCKER-PLAY...?
20

CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING.

HE BOLTS FOR THE COLOSSUS OF CRUMBLING STONE...
...LEARNING TOO LATE THAT ONE GUARD HAS NOT BEEN SUCKERED.
BRAM
THE KNOWLEDGE FORCES HIM TO ENTER THE PYRAMID ON A DIVE AND A ROLL...
CHEEOW
...AND THAT'S WHEN THE FLOOR FALLS OUT--
HA-HA
HA HA
--PLUNGING HIM STRAIGHT INTO A LAIR OF LUNACY.
HAHA
YOU--!
I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN--FIFTY-THREE MILES FROM THE NEAREST CIVILIZATION...
...TO REACH THE FIFTY-THIRD CARD IN THE DECK...
22


THE JOKER!
WELCOME, BATMAN -- WELCOME TO MY DELIGHTFULLY DIZZY DOMAIN.
YOU'RE JUST IN TIME TO SEE ME TAKE OVER THE ENTIRE COUNTRY -- FROM GOVERNMENT MILITIA AND DISGRUNTLED REBELS ALIKE!
EITHER THAT, OR YOU'RE JUST IN TIME TO DIE.
I HAVEN'T MADE UP MY MIND YET...
AND THE BIZARRE JOKER-CAVE ECHOES WITH MAD LAUGHTER.
CONTINUED IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF DETECTIVE: "LAUGH, KILLER, LAUGH" -- AND CONCLUDED IN NEXT MONTH'S BATMAN: "THE JOKER IS WILD!"
23